

Project Heartbreak

by Joshua Cummings

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Honestly, I'm no expert in the social justice movement. I hardly consider myself an example of those who want to self-sacrifice and eagerly serve the needs of the suffering. I never felt that pull myself until "the moment" — a supernatural, heartbreaking experience that I hope and pray will speak or relate to you, someday.

A couple of years back, I attended a youth workers convention hosted by Youth Specialties. Besides the great worship, thought-provoking speakers, and educational workshops, a gallery of booths was set up by various organizations involved in missions and social justice. I walked by each one and grabbed so much literature that, by the end of the first day, my shoulder was sore from carrying a bag full of pamphlets, brochures, DVD's, and other forms of information on these organizations.

Throughout the convention I found myself walking by those booths again and again, saying to myself, *This is it. This is my time to help change the world, the moment I become an action-taker.* But when I got back home and looked through all that literature, I realized that I **had no idea where to begin!!** This discouraged me, and I felt I was letting the world down. My conviction began to fade, and I went on my way.

Shortly after, I went to a worship conference hosted by Hillsong United. There was a song, familiar to many of you, called "Hosanna." During worship, I was floored by the lyrics to the bridge of this song that talked about breaking my heart with what breaks the heart of God.

As I sang those words, I fell to my knees, and tears flowed freely down my face. That was it. That was my moment — the time I felt my true connection to God, when God's conviction took full hold of my heart. A broken heart is where I sensed God's call.

I realized that when the children of God suffer, His heart breaks. If my life was to truly be connected to God, then the things that influence His heart should influence mine in turn. If I am to be called a real Christian, then my heart should break as well. This is the science behind a solid connection: What happens to one end of the link always influences the other end. This was the answer to my question after the youth workers convention "Where do I begin?" My starting place was a broken heart.

I stopped seeing the homeless under the bridge and wondering what they would do with the money I handed them, and began feeling broken by their circumstances. Since then God has opened doors for me to get involved in helping those in this world who need my help.

In the summer of 2008 I was introduced to Matt Shepperd and his active, helping organization I Am Change. One of its many global projects, Hydrate Hope, provides clean water to people dying of preventable diseases just 'cause they can't get a clean glass of water to drink.

Through my experience with I Am Change, God gave me a vision for an organization dedicated to speaking to those who ask themselves the same question I once asked: "Where do I begin?" This vision was shared by my good friend, Emmanuel Chavez. Together we helped transform the vision into a reality.

This organization is called The Solution Project. Our goal is to not only share tangible resources for people to begin their work but also emphasize the fact that it all begins with the heart to serve, and that this heart is developed through connecting theirs to God's. This is a responsibility given to every Christian — to experience a broken heart for those who need our help and to follow that heart in serving the need in the most effective way we can, based on our talents and skills. This is the overall goal of The Solution Project: to help connect God's heart to His people and, in turn, to inspire them to serve together.

God's call is different for everyone who seeks Him. Not everyone is called to drill water wells in Africa or feed impoverished children in India. We are called to see the world through God's eyes and then desire to do something — anything that helps. I hope that my experience will help you to find *your own way* to serve the needs of others, and above all, enhance your connection to God.

More about The Solution Project is available at www.thesolutionproject.org.

What's happening with NFYC?

- *cn u txt me bk?* We'd love to hear from you! Let us know how your day is going, ask for prayer or for some advice. We'll send you daily Bible verses, thoughtful quotes, jokes, encouragement, and other stuff. Send your first and last names, cell phone #, and cell provider (Verizon, Sprint, etc.) to 541-517-1079. TTYL! (U.S. and Canada only.)

- National Youth Ministry is looking for a few bright, young individuals to serve as national youth officers. Got skills on Web design? Want to help lead worship, give your testimony, share your gifts at a camp or retreat? Contact Kurt Lang at nfyc@cog7.org on how to be a part of the team.

- Special **thanks** to the youth groups that participated in our '09 Hunger Lock-In fundraiser: South Miami, FL; Fargo, ND; Wister, OK; Harrisburg, OR; El Paso (Central), TX; Pharr, TX; and San Antonio (Ceralvo and Triple Trees), TX. Together we raised over \$1,000 to support the Dreamland school in Ghana. If other groups or individuals wish to contribute to this construction project, our goal is to raise \$5,000 by December 31. Contact Kurt Lang at 541-517-1079 to see how you can help!

SW District Winter Retreat

December 31, 2009 - January 3, 2010
Salvation Army Camp Hoblitzelle in Midlothian, TX; contact Jason and Rose Rodriguez: jandrrodriguez@att.net

Western Canada Winter Retreat

December 31, 2009 - January 3, 2010
Island Lake Conference Center, Crowsnest, Alberta; contact Cisco and Debbie Chavez: fm.chavez@shaw.ca

Get your friends together and join us for some awesome experiences with each other and with God! Check out our calendar of events at <http://nfyc.cog7.org>.

WE ARE FAMILY



by Amos Ballesteros

Your brother is running all over the place. Your mom is yelling at him to go to his room, and your dad is busy telling you, “Go help your mother.” The whole time you’re going through your own problems, and no one understands. It’s a familiar scene in many homes, with very different individuals trying to be one family.

The family of Christ works a lot the same way. People are going through so many different situations while trying to deal with the world around them. It seems like too much to handle. And it might be for anyone without Christ. He’s why believers pull through where others fail.

Some rifts in the church are obvious. Whether it’s a generation gap, cliques that don’t understand other groups, or the socially outcast, the only way to bridge them is to accept and care for each other. Try to understand that we may not understand another’s problems. We may not know his past or upbringing. We are called to accept people as the individuals they are and not who we want them to be. We live in a world of diversity that clashes with the desire for conformity.

When I talk about being our own persons, I don’t mean that we’re free from the laws of God. I don’t mean we can keep all our bad habits or be rebellious. I’m speaking of our identity as Christians.

Those in our families are often the ones we struggle with the most just to get along. But through all the fights, the snitching, and the nagging, we always

come out loving our family in the end. It should be no different in the family of God.

To make this happen, we need to realize that love isn’t emotion. It isn’t that fluttering feeling you get when you see a stud-of-a-man on the movie screen. Love isn’t the urge that makes you want to flex in front of the foxy lady at the mall. Love is deeper. It’s what you pull from the endless well of power in the Holy Spirit to show kindness to your enemy. Love is a choice to do what’s right in God’s eyes. It’s the kind of love Jesus showed to undeserving people who sent Him to His death (1 Peter 4:8).

If you’re a teenager, the question of why you need to interact with people at all — much less your family — will pop into your mind. But in the daily battles, temptations, and persecutions of Christianity, we need to be prepared. Just as “steel sharpens steel,” so we need to keep each other aware and ready for anything that comes our way. The church as a family, and our families at home, need to stand together through the raging storm called life. We all work toward the same goal. We are the stones God uses to get us there, built on the foundation of Christ. A family is the embodiment of unity. United in Christ, we are stronger than any opposition that comes our way.

We are in this world to bring light where people thought it couldn’t shine and hope for another chance through Christ. How is it that we hope to bring the world together if we can’t get together ourselves?